

What is claimed is:

1. A method of acquiring information relating to potential clinical trial participants meeting predetermined criteria using a data source that includes the dictation records of at least one healthcare professional containing information
5 relating to the medical conditions of a plurality of patients identified by non-personal identifiers;
 - a) selecting the identifiers of patients in said data source that potentially meet said criteria; and
 - b) transmitting said patient identifiers to said healthcare professional to
10 enable said healthcare professional to contact said patients regarding said clinical trial.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said data source is a data stream generated during transcription of dictated records.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said dictation records are transcribed dictation records.
- 15 4. The method of claim 3, wherein each transcribed dictation record is compared against said criteria immediately following transcription.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein said healthcare professional is selected from the group consisting of physicians, dentists, chiropractors, hospitals and clinics.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein said predetermined criteria include at
20 least one criterion selected from the group consisting of disease state, ICD code, and patient complaint.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said data source includes at least one additional source of information relating to the medical conditions of said patients selected from the group consisting of billing records, laboratory records, and admission records, and demographic information.

5 8. A method of identifying prospective clinical trial participants meeting predetermined criteria using a data source including the dictation records of at least one healthcare professional containing information relating to the medical conditions of a plurality of patients identified by non-personal identifiers comprising:

- a) receiving predetermined criteria from a clinical researcher;
- 10 b) preparing a search query based on said predetermined criteria;
- c) selecting non-personal identifiers of patients in said data source that potentially meet said criteria; and
- d) transmitting said identifiers to said healthcare professional to enable said healthcare professional to contact patients who would want to consider participating in
- 15 said trial.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein said data source is a data stream generated during transcription of dictated records.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein said non-personal identifier is an alphanumeric identifier.

20 11. The method of claim 8, wherein said dictation records are transcribed dictation records.

12. The method of claim 8, wherein said healthcare professional is selected from the group consisting of physicians, dentists, chiropractors, hospitals and clinics.

13. The method of claim 8, wherein said predetermined criteria include at least one criterion selected from the group consisting of disease state, ICD-9 code and
5 patient complaint.

14. The method of claim 8, wherein said database includes at least one additional source of information relating to the medical conditions of said patients selected from the group consisting of billing records, laboratory records, and admission records.

10 15. The method of claim 8, wherein said database includes the geographical locations of said patients.

16. A method of identifying prospective participants for a clinical trial who meet participant criteria from a data stream of individual patient records created during transcription of the dictation of at least one healthcare professional containing
15 information relating to the medical conditions of a plurality of patients identified by non-personal identifiers comprising:

- a) preparing a search query based on said predetermined criteria;
- b) comparing each of said records against said query immediately following creation of the record;
- 20 c) selecting non-personal identifiers of patients in said data stream that potentially meet said criteria;

d) transmitting said non-personal identifiers of selected patients to said healthcare professional for use by the healthcare professional in obtaining contact authorization from selected patients;

e) receiving the names of patients who have consented to be interview
5 regarding the clinical trial from said healthcare professional; and

f) contacting patients whose names are received from said healthcare professional.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said query is based on information provided by a clinical researcher, said method further including the step of providing
10 the identification of authorizing patients to said researcher.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein said data stream includes the geographical location of said patients.

19. The method of claim 16, wherein said data stream includes dictation records of a plurality of healthcare professionals, the identifier of each selected patient
15 being transmitted to the healthcare professional originating the record relating to the medical conditions of the selected patient.

20. The method of claim 16, wherein said data stream is accessed after transcription.